

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

Reconsideration of the above identified application is respectfully requested.

In the Office action of March 9, 2004, claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; claims 1 and 4-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,202,114 to Ogusu et al. (Ogusu); claims 1 and 4-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,422,185 to Kuritzkes et al. (Kuritzkes).

In response, Applicants have canceled claim 1 and rewritten claim 2 in an independent form to incorporate the claim limitation of claim 1. Claim 2 has also been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the C₇₋₉ aralkyl group recited therein. Claims 4-8 and 10 have been amended to depend on claim 2 and claim 9 on claim 8 accordingly. Support for the claim 2 amendment can be found at paragraph [0012] in the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants submit the amended claims 2-10 are allowable for reasons set forth below:

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for pointing out that claims 2 and 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have rewritten claim 2 in independent form including all the limitations of claim 1. Claim 3 remains as a dependent claim of claim 2.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite in the meaning of the C₇₋₉ aralkyl group.

In response, Applicants have amended claim 2 which has incorporated the subject matter of claim 1 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection has been overcome.

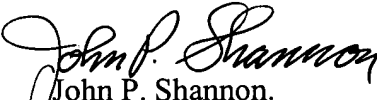
Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1 and 4-10 are rejected as being anticipated by Ogusu. Claims 1 and 4-10 are rejected as being anticipated by Kuritzkes.

In response, Applicants have cancelled claim 1, rewritten claim 2 in an independent format including all of the limitations of claim 1, and amended claims 4-10 to directly or indirectly depend on claim 2. Since Ogusu and Kuritzkes do not teach the combination and weight ratio of cation-modified clay minerals A and B in the amended claim 2, Ogusu and Kuritzkes do not anticipate the claim 2 and all its dependent claims 3-10. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments have overcome the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, the rejections have been overcome and the claims are in condition for allowance, early notice of which is requested. Should the application not be passed for issuance, the examiner is requested to contact the applicant's attorney to resolve the problem.

Respectfully submitted,


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